

**Village of Salado
Salado Municipal Building
301 North Stagecoach Road
Salado, Texas
Minutes of Regular Meeting of Board of Aldermen
June 4, 2020 at 6:30 p.m.**

The Board of Aldermen meeting was called to order at 6:32 p.m.

Alderman Coggin gave the invocation and the Board of Aldermen led the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States and Texas flags.

Board Members Present: Mayor Skip Blancett (joined meeting at 6:49 p.m.), Aldermen Rodney Bell, Amber Preston Dankert, John Cole, and Michael Coggin. Mayor Pro-tem Frank Coachman was absent. *(The meeting was conducted via videoconference.)*

Staff Present: Village Administrator Don Ferguson and City Secretary Cara McPartland

1. Citizens Communications

No citizen comments were heard.

2. Consent Agenda

- A. Approval of minutes of the Regular Board of Aldermen meeting of May 21, 2020.
- B. Approval of minutes of the Special Board of Aldermen meeting of May 27, 2020.

Village Administrator Ferguson requested the following amendment to page 4 of the minutes of May 21, 2020: "... refund of the Village's portion of sales tax collections for ~~April~~ *March* and ~~May~~ *April* 2020 and program application procedures and implementation." Alderman Bell moved to approve the Consent Agenda, as presented, including the requested amendment. Alderman Cole seconded. Motion carried on a vote of 4-0.

3. Presentation

Introduction of and presentation by the recently appointed Texas Department of Transportation Belton Area Engineer Stephen Kasberg regarding the Main Street Improvement Project.

Village Administrator Ferguson introduced Stephen Kasberg who provided background information on the project and his professional qualifications; resolving issues relating to the Salado Museum and Stagecoach Inn; mid-July completion date; field changes; and remaining work days. Mr. Kasberg introduced fellow TxDOT engineer Mark Baumann, who said he is available to hear and resolve concerns, to ensure the project is completed efficiently and safely, and to invite those with questions to reach out to him. Mr. Kasberg and Mr. Baumann thanked the Board for the opportunity to work with the Village of Salado on this project.

Discussion addressed change orders, specific issues involving elevation discrepancies, sewer system, business access (driveways), use of all concrete versus concrete/asphalt, drainage and ADA access in Salado Museum area, street light completion; lighting ceremony plans; on-schedule project completion, and possible weekend work days. Other topics included utility/maintenance costs of landscaping and lighting, tree/garden restoration, project costs, and end of project punch list procedure.

4. Village Administrator's Report

- **Wastewater Project Update**

Village Administrator Ferguson reported connection activity has increased, with two grinder pumps to be installed in the next two weeks. He advised contractors are planning to raise valve/manhole covers for the wastewater system due to sidewalk construction. He reported the Village is in the process of renewing its discharge permit for the treatment plant. He noted that meetings on possible partnerships for wastewater service extensions are planned for later this month. He reported that the new owners of Bush's Chicken have expressed interest in connecting and preliminary cost estimates are being prepared. He advised that monthly revenue from wastewater service billing now exceeds system operating costs.

- **Salado Plaza Road Repairs**

Village Administrator Ferguson reported the concrete patch of the large pothole has been completed and some asphalt repairs are planned.

- **Sanctuary Development**

Village Administrator Ferguson reported there have been no new submissions on the development.

- **Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update**

Village Administrator Ferguson reported 405 cases reported to date, 205 recoveries, and around 19,000 tests administered, with the largest spike attributed to a nursing home in Temple. He detailed the most recent directive from Governor Abbott regarding re-opening of the Texas economy, including increased occupancy limits for various businesses, timeframe for re-opening, and continuing need for measures to prevent spread. He noted that Pace Park Pavilion reservations will be accepted starting July 1, 2020, with plans to open the playscape later this month. He advised the Village's Small Business support initiative is underway, as grant applications are now available and will be accepted through September 30, 2020. He reported the Small Business Resource Center will be opening on June 17, 2020 offering free, confidential business counseling, which will be conducted virtually this month, with in-person counseling at the Municipal Building beginning July 1, 2020. He noted that reservations for counseling appointments may be made online at the Village of Salado's Small Business Support Initiative webpage.

He said a couple of businesses have applied for commercial building permits/certificates of occupancy and fees were waived per the Board's direction to help mitigate negative impact of COVID-19 on local businesses. He advised the Board will be updated on the support program, as applications are submitted.

In addition, Village Administrator Ferguson reported that Salado ISD has approached the Village about the possibility of renaming Williams Road to reflect the school mascot name. He said school zone configurations/speeds will be re-examined given new school construction. He advised Salado ISD is planning a dedication ceremony for the new junior high school to be held on August 15, 2020. He reported the Salado Volunteer Fire Department is in the process of gathering signatures and plans to submit petitions for the creation of an Emergency Services District (ESD) to Bell County on Monday or Tuesday of next week.

Discussion addressed possible resumption of Citizens on Patrol (COP) in July; \$7,500 repair costs and upcoming asphalt patches for Salado Plaza Drive; overlay of Main Street by TxDOT contractor upon completion of improvement project; status of air filter for Royal Street lift station and associated monitoring of gas levels; and future update on Thomas Arnold bridge railing project.

5. Public Hearing and Possible Action

Hold a public hearing and consider approval of an ordinance of the Board of Aldermen of the Village of Salado, Texas, amending the official Zoning Ordinance to create a SF-7A (Single-Family Residential) Zoning District and amending the use regulations chart; repealing any ordinance in conflict therewith, providing for a penalty; providing a severability clause; providing for publication and providing an effective date. (*Village Administrator*)

Village Administrator Ferguson explained the creation of a SF-7A zoning district is intended to allow smaller residential lots for single-family homes. He highlighted permitted/conditional uses, development requirements, and specific setbacks that would be allowed, and noted that 6,000 square feet is the smallest lot size allowed in a new residential subdivision with centralized wastewater service. He advised that creation of an SF-7A zoning district would allow the Village to properly zone properties in new smaller lot subdivisions, such as Drakes Landing located near Royal Street and Smith Branch Road, as opposed to current zoning of such subdivisions as zero lot line homes or townhomes that would need variances for construction of single family homes. He noted that the Planning and Zoning Commission held a public hearing and voted unanimously to recommend approval of the proposed SF-7A zoning district at its May 26th meeting.

Discussion addressed this ordinance's 6,000 foot minimum square footage as compared to existing minimum lot sizes for zero lot line/patio homes, which are 3,000 square feet and 4,500 square feet, respectively; possible increase in minimum 10-foot rear yard setback for properties adjacent to existing homes with 25-foot rear yard setbacks; and 1/3 acre average size for smaller lot subdivisions.

Mayor Blancett opened the public hearing and announced the first, second, and third calls for speakers. Hearing none, Mayor Blancett closed the public hearing at 7:46 p.m.

Alderman Cole moved to approve the ordinance, as presented, including the addition of language requiring a 25-foot minimum rear yard setback for properties that are adjacent to existing residential properties with 25-foot minimum rear yard setbacks. Alderman Dankert seconded. Motion carried on a vote of 4-0.

6. Discussion and Possible Action

- A. Discuss and consider possible action accepting the resignation of Mayor Pro-tem and Alderman Frank Coachman from the Village of Salado Board of Aldermen. (*Mayor Skip Blancett*)

Alderman Bell moved to accept the resignation of Mayor Pro-tem and Alderman Frank Coachman from the Village of Salado Board of Aldermen. Alderman Dankert seconded. Motion carried on a vote of 4-0.

- B. Discuss and consider possible action regarding the process for filling the vacancy created by the resignation of Mayor Pro-tem and Alderman Frank Coachman from the Village of Salado Board of Aldermen. (*Village Administrator*)

Village Administrator Ferguson presented statutory options for filling the vacancy on the Board of Aldermen, including appointing a successor to serve for the remainder of the unexpired term, allowing the position to remain vacant, or calling a special election. He reviewed possible options for filling the vacancy, such as issuing a public call for applicants, with interested parties required to meet candidacy qualifications, and submittal of applications by a stated deadline. He said the Board could review applications and hold interviews, if it so desires, or Board members may simply bring forth names of individuals for consideration and action.

Discussion addressed interest expressed by individuals to date; accepting applications for two weeks, then holding interviews; leaving the position vacant; allow applications to be submitted until the end of next week (June 12, 2020) and schedule for consideration at the Board's June 18, 2020 meeting; addition to sample application form requesting reasons for wanting to serve and qualifications; review of applications by Board, without holding interviews; creating an obligation to fill the position by accepting applications (versus leaving position vacant); preference for an odd number of Board members; and the possibility of giving an unfair advantage through appointment of any potential applicants who are already candidates for the November election.

Alderman Dankert moved to accept applications to fill the vacancy, with a submittal deadline of next Friday (by 5 p.m. on June 12th); consider nominations at the Board's next meeting (June 18th), and include the aforementioned addition to the application form requesting the reason the applicant wants to serve and qualifications for service. Alderman Cole seconded. Motion carried on a vote of 3-1. Alderman Bell voted against.

- C. Discuss and consider possible action appointing a mayor pro-tem for the Village of Salado. (*Mayor Skip Blancett*)

Village Administrator Ferguson advised the Board may act tonight on appointing a mayor pro-tem or wait until a decision has been made on filling the vacancy. He highlighted the role and duties of a mayor pro-tem. He reminded that the mayor pro-tem would serve until the election in November, after which time there would be a need to appoint a new mayor pro-tem.

Alderman Dankert moved to appoint Alderman Coggin as mayor pro-tem to serve until November. Alderman Cole seconded. Motion carried on a vote of 3-0.

Brief discussion established that the 2021 general election will be held in May, not November, and that current officeholders' terms are extended until November 2020, with new aldermen-elect to have shorter terms. Alderman Coggin requested that discussion of moving the Village's general election from May to November be placed on a future workshop agenda.

- D. Discuss and consider possible action designating signatories for the Village of Salado's bank accounts. (*Village Administrator*)

Village Administrator Ferguson explained there is a need to designate a signatory due to the resignation of Mayor Pro-tem and Alderman Frank Coachman.

Alderman Cole moved to designate Alderman Bell as a signatory for the Village of Salado's bank accounts. Alderman Dankert seconded. Motion carried on a vote of 4-0.

- E. Discuss and consider possible action regarding a proposal to utilize hotel-motel tax revenues to help fund building renovations at the Salado Museum located at 423 S. Main Street in Salado, Texas. (*Alderman Mike Coggin*)

Alderman Coggin spoke of his discussion with Salado Museum Director Dave Swarthout about the replacement of the balcony and associated fundraising efforts. Alderman Coggin proposed utilizing hotel-motel tax revenue to help fund a portion of needed repairs and reminded of the Museum's status as a non-profit volunteer organization. Mr. Swarthout said the Museum is funded solely through private donations and fundraising events, which have been impacted by COVID-19. He noted that estimates are being sought from local contractors and are expected to be around \$21,000. He stressed that Salado Museum and College Park is a 501(C)(3) non-profit organization and has been a tremendous asset to the community's residents and visitors. Alderman Cole asked about possible donation amounts and drainage issues at the Museum. Alderman Coggin responded that the renovations would legally qualify as an appropriate expenditure of hotel-motel tax revenue, that sufficient revenues exist for an expenditure of approximately \$5,000 to \$7,500, and that TxDOT's area engineer has committed to resolving any drainage issues at the State's expense. Village Administrator Ferguson noted that an email from Tablerock President Jackie Mills was forwarded to the Board expressing her concerns about the expenditure.

Discussion established that the Museum is not privately owned and is run by a Board of Directors; included research on past historical designation efforts; Museum's loss of approximately \$8,000 due to impact of the COVID-19 pandemic; scope of Tourism Advisory Board's duties focused on expenditures for marketing/tourism advertising plans and strategies; "precedent-setting" concerns, should other entities without a historical designation request hotel-motel tax funds; Mr.

Swarthout's statements regarding the lawful and appropriate expenditure of hotel-motel tax revenue and the Museum's housing of the Visitor's Center, the Tourism Director's office, and the Chamber of Commerce. Speaking to concerns about setting a precedent, Mr. Swarthout spoke of the Museum's role as a tourist attraction bringing visitors to Salado, unlike other non-profit 501(C)(3) groups such as the Lions Club. Village Administrator Ferguson cited Texas Tax Code, Section 351.101(a)(5), Use of Tax Revenue relating to historic restoration and preservation projects and encouraging tourists to visit preserved historic sites or museums and said the Board may wish to consider developing a program to allocate hotel-motel tax revenue toward other historic projects in the future. Discussion continued on rescheduled and upcoming Museum fundraising events to help offset lack of donations due to COVID-19's impact. Village Administrator Ferguson stated that a funding agreement can be drafted for Board approval.

Alderman Dankert moved to direct Village Administrator Ferguson to draft a funding agreement with the Salado Museum to allow for an expenditure of hotel-motel tax revenue in an amount not to exceed \$8,000 and present the draft agreement to the Board at a future meeting for final approval. Alderman Coggin seconded. Motion carried on a vote of 4-0.

F. Discuss and consider possible action relating to the fiscal impact of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on the Village of Salado. (*Village Administrator*)

Village Administrator Ferguson anticipated receipt of the Village's monthly sales tax check next week, which is expected to reflect a significant decrease due to the impact of COVID-19. Alderman Coggin asked if the governor is moving toward freezing property taxes and requested that a letter be sent to Governor Abbott regarding such a freeze. Village Administrator Ferguson spoke on recent tax reform legislation that contains an emergency provision that would allow communities to fall back to the 8 percent ceiling, as opposed to the 3.5 percent ceiling, in the event of a declared disaster. He stressed that Governor Abbott strongly encourages cutting budgets versus raising taxes and it is unknown at this time if the State will intervene to eliminate the emergency provision. Village Administrator Ferguson emphasized that the intent is *not* to raise taxes per the Board's direction. He cautioned that commercial values are expected to be mailed next week and may increase on average as much as 25-35 percent. In response to Alderman Coggin, Village Administrator Ferguson stated that an item could be added to the Board's next agenda requesting that a letter be sent to appropriate entities regarding tax relief.

G. Discuss and consider possible action regarding the continued use of the virtual meeting format for Salado Board of Aldermen meetings. (*Village Administrator*)

Village Administrator Ferguson asked for Board input. Aldermen Coggin and Cole favored resuming in-person meetings. Alderman Dankert favored resuming in-person meetings beginning July 1st. Alderman Bell concurred with Alderman Dankert.

Alderman Bell moved to resume in-person meetings of the Board of Aldermen beginning July 1, 2020. Alderman Dankert asked if the virtual meeting format could continue to facilitate public access and Village Administrator Ferguson replied affirmatively. Alderman Coggin seconded. Motion carried on a vote of 4-0.

Adjournment

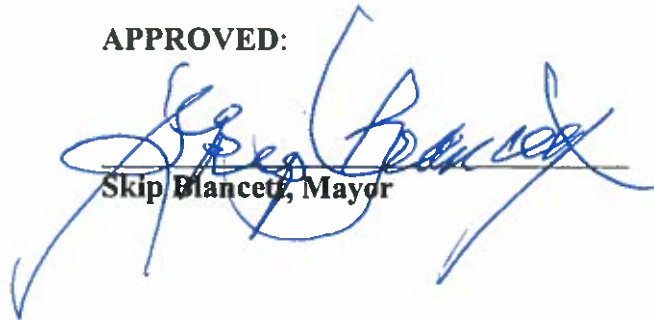
Alderman Cole moved to adjourn. Alderman Bell seconded. Mayor Blancett called the meeting adjourned at 8:49 p.m.

Recorded by:

Cara McPartland

These minutes approved on the 18th of June, 2020.

APPROVED:


Skip Blancett, Mayor

ATTEST:


Cara McPartland, City Secretary

